

## **What is Abuse?**

One out of every four women in this country will suffer some kind of violence at the hands of her husband or boyfriend. Very few will tell anyone ~ not a friend, a relative, a neighbor, or the police.

Victims of domestic violence come from all walks of life- all cultures, all income groups, all ages, and all religions. They share feelings of helplessness, isolation, guilt, fear, and shame. All hope it won't happen again, but often it does. Are you Abused?

Massachusetts General law (Ch.209A) defines abuse as:

- Actual physical abuse
- An attempt to harm another
- Placing another in fear of imminent serious physical harm
- Or causing another to engage in sexual relations by force, threat of force, or duress.

## **What is the Domestic Violence SafeLink?**

SafeLink is the first Massachusetts statewide domestic violence hotline and is operated by Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc. in Boston. The SafeLink toll-free number is 1-877-785-2020 . SafeLink is answered by trained advocates 24 hours a day in English, Spanish and TTY ( 1-877-521-2601 ). It also has the capacity to provide multilingual translation in more than 140 languages. SafeLink is integrated with Casa Myrna Vazquez's already existing toll-free hotline; callers can access SafeLink by calling either number. SafeLink provides an integrated and seamless response to victims of domestic violence through its use of technology and its multilingual capacity. \*Please continue to utilize CMV services by calling our existing toll-free number at 1-800-992-2600 .

## **What services does SafeLink provide?**

- immediate crisis intervention
- safety planning
- support for victims
- information and referrals
- access to emergency shelter by linking the caller to programs across the state while remaining connected to the caller
- support for family members, friends, and professionals who are concerned about a victim

of domestic violence.

### **What can someone expect when calling SafeLink?**

SafeLink is a resource for all victims of domestic violence. Each caller will speak to a trained advocate who will provide non-judgmental support and assistance. SafeLink does not provide advice. Callers are assisted in identifying the options that are appropriate for their situation. SafeLink fully respects the individual circumstances of each caller and emphasizes the importance of safety planning. SafeLink also informs callers about available resources in their own communities and in turn, community-based programs are able to promote SafeLink as an additional resource for victims of domestic-violence. All calls to SafeLink are confidential.

### **What is the need for a statewide hotline?**

SafeLink is intended to complement, but not to replace the network of domestic violence organizations that provide life-saving services across the Commonwealth. Through participation in the Jane Doe telecommunications network, emergency shelters are able to share information about the available shelter space for victims of domestic violence. SafeLink facilitates easier access to shelter by operating nine lines at one time and by utilizing technology to link callers with emergency shelter programs while remaining connected to the caller. This system ensures that a victim of domestic violence will receive immediate access to assistance rather than having to call individual programs across the state.

### **Services of the Brookline Police Department**

1. Restraining orders can be obtained 24 hours a day. All Patrol personnel are trained in the preliminary investigation of domestic violence. Supervisors in the patrol divisions are responsible for obtaining emergency restraining orders from the “on call” Judicial Response System. All members of the Brookline Police are trained in responding to Domestic Violence.

### **What can be requested in a 209A order?**

- A court may order the abuser refrain from abusing, hurting, or harassing the victim in any way Vacate the household
- Stay away from the victim
- No contact, directly or indirectly, or through third parties
- Stay away from places the victim and child may be. (work, school, etc.)
- Temporary custody of any minor children
- Maintain all utilities in the household

- Surrender all firearms, ammunition, and license's and permits for firearms.
- Text of Massachusetts General Law (Ch.209A )

### **Restraining Orders Cover people who:**

- Are married to each other,
- Are or were residing together in the same household (this includes same sex relationships, couples living together, parents and children, roommates)
- Are related by blood
- Related by marriage or were related by marriage
- Have a child in common, regardless of marriage
- Are or have been in a substantial dating relationship

2. Emergency Shelter The Brookline Police can arrange for short term emergency shelter through a federal grant. The advocate assigned to the Domestic Violence unit can arrange for placement in a shelter on a temporary basis.

3. Emergency Phones Through a generous donation by the community, the Brookline Police can arrange for “hi-risk” victims to be loaned phones that are programmed to directly dial the Police. These phones are loaned on a month basis.

4. Referrals The Officers assigned to the Domestic Violence unit or the advocate assigned to the unit can assist with referrals to appropriate agencies and advocacy groups.

If you have any questions about this section, please feel free to email: [bill\\_riley@town.brookline.ma.us](mailto:bill_riley@town.brookline.ma.us) OR [cheryl\\_molloy@town.brookline.ma.us](mailto:cheryl_molloy@town.brookline.ma.us)

## **Domestic Abuse Warning Signs**

- Have you ever been hit, pushed, grabbed, or threatened by your partner?
- Does your partner frighten or intimidate you?
- Have you told your partner that you are afraid of him/her?

- Have you shown fear in other ways?
- Are your children in fear of him/her?
- Does your partner insult you, call you names, or say things that make you feel uncomfortable?
- Does your partner pressure you to do things their way, make all the decisions, or try to control you?
- Does your partner have a history of violence, or being short tempered?
- When your partner treats you badly do they consider it to be your fault?
- Do they blame their anger on alcohol, stress or other problems?

### **Are you abused? Does the person you love . . .**

- "Track" all of your time?
- Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- Discourage your relationships with family and friends?
- Prevent you from working or attending group meetings or school?
- Criticize you for little things?
- Anger easily when drinking alcohol or taking drugs?
- Control all the finances and force you to account in detail for what you spend
- Humiliate you in front of others?
- Destroy personal property or sentimental items?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick, or bite you or the children?
- Use, or threaten to use, a weapon against you?
- Threaten to hurt you or the children?
- Force you to engage in sex against your will?

If you answer "yes" to even a few of these questions, it's time to get help!!

### **If you are hurt, what can you do?**

There are no easy answers, but there are things you can do to protect yourself:

- Call the police or sheriff. Assault, even by family members, is a crime. The police often have information.
- Leave, or have someone come stay with you. Go to a battered-woman's shelter – you can call a crisis line.
- Get medical attention from your doctor or a hospital emergency room. Ask the staff to photograph injuries.

### **Don't ignore the problem!**

- Contact your family court for information about a civil protection order that doesn't involve criminal charges.
- Talk to someone. Part of the abuser's power comes from secrecy. Victims are often ashamed to let others know.
- Plan ahead and know what you will do if you are attacked again. If you decide to leave, choose a safe place to go.
- Learn to think independently. Try to plan for the future and set goals for yourself.

## **Dangers / Have a Plan**

- Have a safety plan
- Pre-arrange for a place to go if you are planning on leaving your abuser.
- One of the most dangerous times for the victim is when they are terminating the relationship. Plan
- Obtain a restraining order as soon as possible.
- Change your locks
- Seek emergency shelter if you don't feel safe at home
- Change your routine
- Inform the people you work with / for
- Avoid isolated areas